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To reference the Gene Ontology Consortium, please cite this paper:

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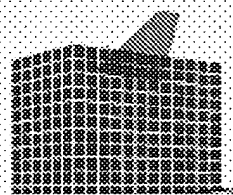
Tool Enables Data Visualization and Trend Analysis

News Story by [Lee Copeland](#)

AUGUST 14, 2000

([COMPUTERWORLD](#))

Inc.'s decision-analysis tool allows users to collect and analyze data and perform decision analysis via the Web. The new version, Spotfire.net 5.0, features enhanced data visualization capabilities that aid users in visually detecting data trends and anomalies, company officials said.



Released last month by

Cambridge, Mass.-based firm, Spotfire.net 5.0 includes support for XML, which allows data files to be read and incorporated into other applications. The application also includes enhanced data-visualization tools, including some that support data plotting and as many as 1 million records.

Greg Tucker-Kellogg, a senior scientist at Millennium Predictive Medicine Inc. in Cambridge, said Spotfire's added support for visual-trellis and split-plotting capabilities would help in comparing different data sets with one another.

"Up until now, you could only view the same data in different ways," he said. "Now, you can split the data into adjacent visualizations and work with different subsets of the data, which is important when looking at data with many variables."

Tariq Andrea, a senior researcher at Pharmacopeia Inc., a \$104 million chemical development and drug discovery firm in Princeton, N.J., said he plans to use Spotfire.net's visualization capabilities to help spot the degree of diversity among chemical combinations.

Andrea's research group will use the tool to generate 3-D graphs of chemical libraries that contain 100,000 molecules each. He said he hopes that by visually representing these libraries, the tool will help scientists more easily determine the size, flexibility and hydrophobicity (greasiness) characteristics of the chemicals.

"After we've done the data mining, we want to visualize the results and then put them in the hands of the end user," he said.

Analysts said graphical depictions of data enable users to more readily judge correlations and differences among data groups.


Data Comprehension

"Visualization of data is a new area in reporting tools, because a lot of business intelligence analytics offer just tabular reports," said David Folger, an analyst at Meta Group Inc. in Stamford, Conn. "There is a value in tools that allow people to understand the meaning of data better."

"It's a question of the bandwidth of the user doing the analysis," said Roddy Martin, an analyst at AMR Research Inc. in Boston. "Some researchers can come up with trends from a heap of numbers, but doing 3-D data analysis, they may be able to see a correlation that would be difficult to see by just looking at the numbers."

Such visualization capabilities set Spotfire.net apart from competitors - such as SAS Institute Inc. in Cary, N.C., and Aegis Analytical Corp. in Lafayette, Colo. - in the statistical analysis space, added Martin. Spotfire.net 5.0 also allows users to access data and perform analytics via a Web browser from a corporate intranet and publish analysis results on the Web, which is important to large biotechnology and manufacturing firms, said Martin.

"One problem manufacturers in the life sciences have is a fragmented IT architecture, which makes it difficult to have access to the same information across multiple functional groups," said Martin. "Because Spotfire has Web-based capabilities, any user within the enterprise can access different data sources via the Web and do the analysis."



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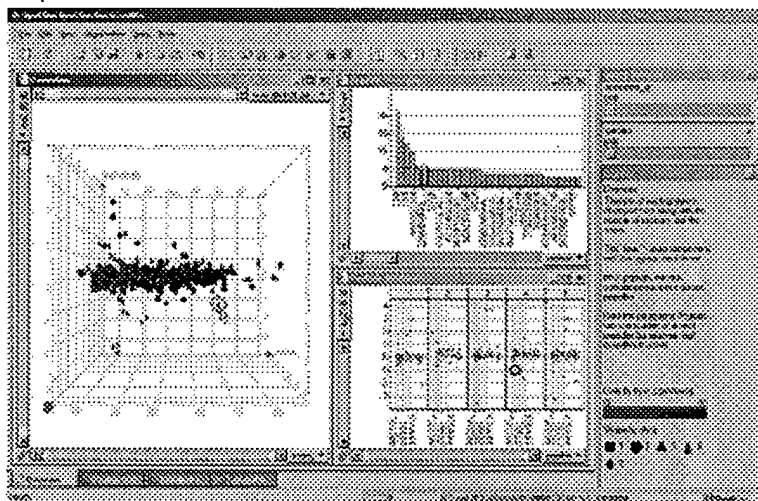
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- Alexander Schmidt, Scientist, Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry

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